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# The Cult of Relics in the Middle Ages<sup>1</sup>

by WILFRID BONSER

THE new *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*<sup>2</sup> defines relics as follows: 'In Christian usage the word is applied to the material remains of a saint after his death, as well as to the sacred objects that have been in contact with his body.'

The two following examples of each of these two categories of relic will serve to illustrate the import of this article.

1 (a) The body of S. Cuthbert (d. 687) which is still preserved at Durham, was found at each exhumation to be incorrupt: it was an object of pilgrimage until the Reformation.

1 (b) The mummified body of S. Chiara (d. 1253) is still exhibited in her church at Assisi. The nuns tell us it has thus been preserved owing to her virginity and the purity of her life.

2 (a) The earliest instance of an associated object used as a relic occurs in the Acts of the Apostles: 'And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul, so that from his body [literally, skin] were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons [*σουδάρια* = cloths to wipe off sweat] and the diseases departed from them and the evil spirits went out of them.'<sup>3</sup>

2 (b) Bede tells us that 'the very garments that had been on S. Cuthbert's body, either while living or after he was dead, were not exempt from the virtue of performing cures'.<sup>4</sup>

The preservation of the bodies of saints I have dealt with in much detail elsewhere,<sup>5</sup> and a summary of the methods employed is all that is required here. From the descriptions of the various

<sup>1</sup> This article is supplementary to my article 'Medical folklore of Venice and Rome' in *Folklore*, Vol. 67, 1956, pp. 1-15, and to my book *The Medical Background of Anglo-Saxon England*, 1963. These will be quoted as Bonser (1) and Bonser (2), so as to avoid repetition of details. Some of my references (e.g. 'Preserved in another French church') have not satisfied my desire for precise and accurate information, but I hope I have furnished sufficient detail for a general picture of relics in western Europe. The article by J. A. MacCulloch in Hastings' *Encyclopaedia*, vol. 10, pp. 680-8 is very fully documented (q.v.).

<sup>2</sup> Edited by F. L. Cross, 1957: 'corrected', 1961.

<sup>3</sup> Acts, Ch. 19, 11-12.

<sup>4</sup> Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, iv, 31.

<sup>5</sup> Bonser (2), pp. 191-203.

bodies when they were exhumed for translation to places where they could be more expeditiously exhibited to pilgrims, it is obvious that various means were employed in order to prevent, or at least to arrest, decay. If the account of the translation says that a fragrant odour filled the church, it is an indication that this was produced by some preservative: if an oily matter exuded from the body, as is narrated in the case of S. Andrew, it is obvious that oil was the preservative that had been employed — and the oil, in its turn, was used for curative purposes, thus enhancing the reputation of the relics. This seems a more scientific answer to the problem of the bodies remaining uncorrupt than the official explanation that it was due to the virginity of the saint. It is probable that the body of S. Cuthbert was so desiccated owing to the asceticism of his life on Farne that no preservative was required for it.

The acquisition of relics and the pilgrimages to the shrines in which they were displayed were two of the major activities of the medieval Church, and the story to be told in this article is one of faith combined with amazing credulity on the part of the pilgrim, and of initial piety followed by worldly greed — and consequent fraud — on the part of the possessors of the relics.

In the early years, the bodies of saints and holy men were conserved by their friends and followers as objects to be revered and cherished. Worship was reserved for God and honour was accorded to the relic.

J. A. MacCulloch<sup>6</sup> says that the bodies were considered to be endued with mystic power (*δύναμις*), or grace (*χάρις πνευματική*), and so also were their graves, as this power was as much in the parts as in the whole, when the custom became prevalent to dismember the bodies and to distribute the parts. 'He who touched the bones of a martyr received a share of the sanctification (*ἀγιασμός*) from the grace dwelling in them.'

The original purpose for which relics were collected and employed was the healing of the sick. In the absence of a saint whose magnetic personality was efficacious in effecting a cure, the use of relics by the simple monk was a matter of routine, and the faith of the patient in the power of the relic might produce the hoped for cure.

A second purpose for which relics were employed was to secure

<sup>6</sup> Hastings' *Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 10, 1918, p. 654.

a personal contact with a saint so that his intervention might be the more effectively solicited on behalf of the suppliant for his general welfare, the forgiveness of his sins or for the good of his soul.

MacCulloch<sup>7</sup> gives some early instances of the collection of relics. Such were those of S. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch and a disciple of S. John the Evangelist, who was martyred under Trajan in the amphitheatre at Rome. 'His larger bones . . . were carried to Antioch, and there placed in a napkin, as an inestimable treasure left to the church by the grace that was in the martyr.' Some of his remains were later brought to S. Clemente in Rome, where they are preserved beneath the altar.<sup>8</sup>

There is little evidence for the worship of relics until Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century. It was then approved — and encouraged — by such men as SS. Ambrose and Augustine of Hippo in the West and SS. Basil and Chrysostom in the East: and it prospered exceedingly from that time.

With the decay of moral standards in the medieval Church, the laudable employment of relics became subordinated to the desire of each monastery to better itself, and relics were found to be a very paying proposition. It was decreed by the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 that no church should be dedicated without the placing of relics. This necessitated the fabrication of a relic if no genuine article was to be had. The papal decree that relics had the power of reproducing themselves did much to relieve the situation: it also accounts for the multiplicity of the limbs of the same saint to be found, and for the great number of the fragments of the True Cross.

If a monastery was poor, it was a great temptation for it to secure some relic which would be a source of wealth for it as a result of the pilgrimages which would be made to the shrine thus created. A story occurs in the *Flores Historiarum* under the date 458 of how two monks from the church of Edessa in Phoenicia collected a head of S. John the Baptist from a place which was revealed to them by the saint himself. Many vain attempts were made by the hierarchy of the Church to put a stop to such prac-

<sup>7</sup> Op. cit., p. 653.

<sup>8</sup> R. M. Dowdall, *Short guide to . . . S. Clemente*, 1953, p. 14.

tices, even by subjecting spurious relics to the Ordeal.<sup>9</sup> But true relics, stolen relics, disputed relics, and even facsimiles of relics continued to work miracles.<sup>10</sup>

The church of S. Giorgio in Velabro at Rome is said to possess the spear with which he killed the dragon, and part of his standard. The sword and buckler with which S. Michael fought the devil were exhibited at Mont S. Michel until the French Revolution. Frauds such as these gave rise to the well-known story by Boccaccio:<sup>11</sup> A friar promises to show to some country-folk of Certaldo a feather from the wing of the Archangel Gabriel 'which he dropped, at the annunciation in the Virgin's chamber.' Two practical jokers, however, substituted some coals for the feather, but the friar, nothing daunted, told the people that these were the coals that had roasted S. Laurence!

The most assiduous collector of relics in the earlier period was Venice. 'The Venetian fleets', says Grant Allen, 'in the early ages brought home so many bodies of saints that the city became a veritable repository of holy corpses.'<sup>12</sup> In later times one of the most assiduous collectors was Philip II of Spain. John Murray, speaking of the Escorial, says that this king 'accumulated on the whole more than 7421 relics'.<sup>13</sup> He specifies that there were eleven whole bodies, 300 heads, 600 odd legs and arms, 346 veins and arteries, and 1400 'bits' (teeth, toes, etc.), 'errors excepted'. These objects, which Philip had kept in 515 shrines, were left on the floor by General La Houssay when he sacked the Escorial in December 1808: they were collected later by the monks, but many of the labels had been lost.

Perhaps the most disastrous event for art in the broadest sense that has ever occurred was the sack of Constantinople in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade. The crusaders were only too aware of the treasures which the city contained, and their greed, and especially that of the Venetians, induced them to turn aside from the avowed object of their expedition. But the churches were ransacked especially for relics and their reliquaries: and a deliberate search was continued for months for relics which had been concealed. The city contained, we are told, 'almost all the sacred

<sup>9</sup> Bonser (2), pp. 180-1.

<sup>10</sup> For many more examples, see MacCulloch, *op. cit.*, 656 (a).

<sup>11</sup> *Decameron*, Day 6, Novel 10.

<sup>12</sup> *Historical Guides — Venice*, 1907, p. 21.

<sup>13</sup> Murray, *Spain*, 1869, p. 77.

survivals, nearly all that remained in fact, or was believed to remain, of the relics of the Saviour, His Mother, and most of His Apostles.<sup>14</sup> I shall endeavour here to particularize these relics, and to trace where they are now located, as well as describing other relics which were venerated in western Europe during the Middle Ages — and since.

I will deal with these relics under the five following divisions:

1. Christ Himself:
2. The Virgin Mary:
3. The Evangelists and Apostles:
4. Other contemporaries (SS. Mary Magdalen, John the Baptist, Paul, Stephen, Barnabas):
5. Medieval and other saints (a) Continental,  
(b) English.

## I. CHRIST

Since S. Luke tells us that Christ was 'taken up' bodily into heaven, it is obvious that His body was not preserved anywhere as a relic. But phials containing His blood — of which that at Bruges (brought from the Holy Land after the Second Crusade) is, perhaps, the best known — are among the most numerous of all relics. One French church was accredited with a phial containing His tears, and another with one containing His breath! The Abbaye de la Trinité at Vendôme was long a place of pilgrimage to one of His tears, shed at the tomb of Lazarus.<sup>15</sup>

But the most extreme example of ingenious medieval invention is preserved in the church of Domine Quo Vadis on the Via Appia. This is a copy of the footprint said to have been left when He met S. Peter, *in a vision*, as the latter was fleeing from Rome so as to escape martyrdom. The original of His footprint is also preserved: it is in a reliquary in the adjacent church of S. Sebastiano.

There are innumerable articles, mostly spurious, connected with the person of Christ from the cradle to the ascension. John Calvin published in 1561 (latest edition, 1870) his 'Very profitable treatise on relics' — profitable 'yf there were a regester of all saintes bodies

<sup>14</sup> W. H. Hutton, *Constantinople* (Medieval Towns Series), 1904, p. 116. See also Riant, *Des dépouilles religieuses enlevées de Constantinople au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in *Mém. Soc. Nat. Antiq. de France*, 4<sup>e</sup> série, tome 6, 1875, pp. 1-214.

<sup>15</sup> A. J. C. Hare, *South-western France*, 1890, p. 11.

and other reliques'. In it he gives a list of those relics of Christ which were then existing.

Those housed in the reliquary called the *Prima S. Petri* at Corbie in the north-east of France are an extraordinary collection. They include His blood, His hair, part of the umbellical cord, part of the manger, part of the cross, the napkin, clothing, etc. The relic chamber of the *Sancta Sanctorum* at the Lateran claims His sandals.

Two of the major articles connected with His infancy are in the church of S. Maria Maggiore at Rome. One is the boards of the manger in which He lay in Bethlehem, and which were brought thence in the seventeenth century: it is now under the altar of the Blessed Sacrament. The other is the *Santa Culla*, the cradle in which He was carried into Egypt: this is preserved in a reliquary which is six feet high and adorned with bas-reliefs and statuettes in silver.

The Gaulish bishop Arculf made a pilgrimage to Palestine about the year 670, and an account of it was written at his dictation by S. Adamnan, ninth abbot of Hye. He says, 'After Jerusalem, Arculf went to Bethlehem [and saw] a natural half cave, the outer part of which is said to have been the place of our Lord's birth; the inside is called our Lord's Manger. . . . Near the wall is a hollow stone, which received back from the wall the water in which our Lord's body was washed, and has ever since been full of the purest water, without any diminution.'<sup>16</sup>

The cloth in which He was wrapped when born is kept at S. Paolo in Rome, and another copy is reported at San Salvador in Spain.

Christ's swaddling-clothes are among the Four Great Relics contained in a late-Romanesque silver shrine in the cathedral treasury at Aachen.

The bones of the Three Magi were brought by the Empress Helena from Palestine to Constantinople. They travelled thence, via Milan, to Cologne, where they are still preserved in a glorious reliquary (1190-1200) in the cathedral treasury.

S. John says in his Gospel<sup>17</sup> that there were six water-pots

<sup>16</sup> Adamnan, *Travels of Bishop Arculf in the Holy Land*: in T. Wright, *Early travels in Palestine*, Bohn's Library, 1848, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> S. John, Ch. 2, 6-11.

which held the water which Christ turned into wine at the marriage-feast at Cana in Galilee — His first miracle. As many as thirty-five appeared in various sanctuaries during the Middle Ages.

S. Willibald, bishop of Eichstadt, who visited Palestine in 721-7 says that one of them could be seen in his day in the church at Cana. Victor Guérin, visiting Kefr-Keuna, a village of Galilee, in 1882, says that two of the water-pots were then shown in the church there.

The whereabouts of some of the thirty-five have been recorded as follows: in France, that at Port Royale was brought back by S. Louis from his crusade, that at Beauvais came from Constantinople in 1217, that at the monastery of Saint-Florent was given to it by Charlemagne, there was also one at Cluny and one at Angers. In Spain, one appears in a twelfth-century inventory at Oviedo and is said to be there still, another is at San Salvador. In Italy, one at Bologna (since 1359), one at Ravenna, and at Pisa (on a porphyry column on the right of the high altar of the duomo) one which was brought home from Jerusalem, according to an old Pisan chronicle, by a Pisan crusader. In Germany, one at Aachen (possessed since 1237), one at Reichenau (possessed since 910), one at Hildesheim (acquired in 1020), and one at Quedlinburg. Some of the wine itself is said to be at Orleans.<sup>18</sup>

A marble well-head at the Lateran is said to be that at which He conversed with the woman of Samaria. The marble stone on which He then sat is to be found at S. Marco in Venice.

The palm-branch which He held in His hand on His entry into Jerusalem is shown at San Salvador.

There are many relics connected with the Last Supper. The table at which the thirteen sat is kept at the Lateran in the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament. Some of the bread appears at San Salvador.<sup>19</sup> The knife with which the Pascal Lamb was cut may be found at Trèves: another knife is claimed by S. Marco at Venice. The cup in which the wine was administered is in at least two places in France. The platter on which the Pascal Lamb was placed is claimed by three places. The towel on which He

<sup>18</sup> F. de Mély, *Vases de Cana*, in *Monuments et Mémoires* (Fondation E. Piot), 10, 1903, pp. 145-70. See also Chambers, *Book of Days*, 1, p. 587: an unsatisfactory source, but quoted for what it is worth.

<sup>19</sup> Chambers, *op. cit.*, p. 587.



dried the Apostles' feet may be found both at Rome and at Aachen.

Bede, speaking of the Holy Places at Jerusalem, says that in the valley of Jehoshaphat, there is 'a stone inserted in the wall, on which Christ knelt when He prayed on the night in which He was betrayed; and the marks of His knees are still to be seen in the stone, as if it had been as soft as wax'.<sup>20</sup>

The vessel in which Pilate washed his hands is still to be seen at Bologna.<sup>21</sup>

Part of the column to which Christ was bound at the flagellation is preserved in the church of S. Prasside in Rome.<sup>22</sup> It is said to have been given by the Saracens to Cardinal Giovanni Colonna of this church.

The True Cross, or fragments of it, are to be seen in countless places. It was 'found' by S. Helena<sup>23</sup> at Jerusalem in 298. The main hall of the Sessorian Palace at Rome was converted into a church by her in order to house it: 'it received in time the name of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, and became a sort of appendage to the neighbouring Lateran.'<sup>24</sup>

Calvin remarks that the fragments of the Cross are so many that they would load a large ship, and though carried by Christ Himself would take 300 men to support its weight. Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386) speaks of the Wood of the Cross as distributed piecemeal to all the world in his day. 'The part of it kept at Jerusalem,' says MacCulloch, quoting Paulinus, 'gave off fragments of itself without diminishing.'<sup>25</sup>

The title of the True Cross was discovered in 1492 in a niche in the basilica of S. Croce in Gerusalemme.

Relics connected with the Passion are numerous. Bishop Arculf is his account of Jerusalem says, 'In the space between the Martyrdom and the Golgotha [church] is a seat, in which is the cup of our Lord, concealed in a little shrine, which Arculf touched and kissed through a hole in the covering. It is made of silver of the

<sup>20</sup> Bede, *De locis sanctis libellus*, Ch. 5 (*Works*, trans. Giles, 4, 1843, p. 417).

<sup>21</sup> F. de Mély, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

<sup>22</sup> Bonser (1), p. 14.

<sup>23</sup> The story of the 'Invention of the Cross' is to be seen in the frescoes of Piero della Francesca on the walls of the chancel of S. Francesco at Arezzo. S. Helena's head is said to be in a reliquary in the cathedral treasury at Trèves.

<sup>24</sup> A. L. Fotheringham, *The Monuments of Christian Rome*, 1908, p. 24.

<sup>25</sup> MacCulloch, *op. cit.*, p. 655.

capacity of about a French quart, and has two handles one on each side. In it also is the sponge which was held up to our Lord's mouth. The soldier's lance, with which he pierced our Lord's side, which has been broken into two pieces, is also kept in the portico of the Martyrdom.<sup>26</sup> S. Willibald also visited the church of Golgotha. He says, 'There is a bed within, on which our Lord's body lay . . . and before the door of the sepulchre lies a great square stone in the likeness of the former stone which the angel rolled from the mouth of the monument.'<sup>27</sup>

The cloth with which He was girded on the cross is one of the Four Great Relics at Aachen.

The crown of thorns, originally at Constantinople, was given by the Emperor Baldwin II to S. Louis,<sup>28</sup> who built the Sainte Chapelle in Paris to house it — and other relics. Portions of the crown (and of the sponge) are kept in S. Prasside at Rome. Thorns from the crown are to be found in various places. One, brought from Palestine by a Pisan monk, was presented in 1333 by one of his descendants to the chapel of the Madonna della Spina on the bank of the Arno at Pisa. Another, which turns the colour of blood every Good Friday, is shown at Santiago de Compostella.

The seamless coat is exhibited at Trèves, where it attracts vast crowds of pilgrims. Venice decided in 1455 to make a bid of 10,000 ducats for it, 'but it was not to be had'.<sup>29</sup> It is said that there are some twenty other copies of the holy coat — at Rome, Argenteuil, Bremen, and elsewhere.

The dice which the soldiers cast for it are also at Trèves: they occur again at San Salvador. The stone on which the dice were cast — a porphyry slab — is at the Lateran!

The four nails have also multiplied exceedingly, there are copies at Cologne, Trèves, and elsewhere. The most famous is that which was enclosed in the Iron Crown of Lombardy, now in the chapel of S. Theodolind in the cathedral of Monza.

The sacred lance (of Longinus) was originally at Constantinople, and is now to be found in Rome, where Innocent VIII consecrated

<sup>26</sup> Adamnan, *The Travels of Bishop Arculf* in Wright, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> *The Travels of Willibald, written from his recital by a nun of Heidenheim*, in Wright, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>28</sup> He also gave him Moses' rod and the jawbone of S. John the Baptist.

<sup>29</sup> J. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, Phaidon Press, 1944, pp. 47-8.

a chapel for it, having received it from the Sultan Bajazet in 1489.<sup>30</sup> It is one of the four great relics of S. Peter's, the others being the head of S. Andrew, a portion of the True Cross, brought by S. Helena, and the napkin of S. Veronica. There is another copy of the lance at the Sainte Chapelle and five more are said to exist elsewhere.

The Holy Shroud is in a chapel behind the apse in the cathedral of Turin. It was brought from Jerusalem to France in the fourteenth century and thence to Turin in 1578 by Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy. Much scientific research has lately been carried out to test its authenticity — which it would appear now to be hard to disprove. A second Santo Sudario is preserved in the Camara Santa at Oviedo in a blue enamel box.<sup>31</sup>

Bishop Arculf says, 'On the highest point of Mount Olivet . . . is a large round church. . . . The inner apartment is not vaulted and covered, because of the passage of our Lord's body. . . . On the ground are to be seen the last prints in the dust of our Lord's feet: and although the earth is daily carried away by believers, yet it still remains as before and retains the same impression of the feet.'<sup>32</sup>

## 2. THE VIRGIN MARY

As in the case of her Son, the existence of any bodily relics of the Virgin was rendered impossible owing to the legend that on the third day after the Apostles had laid her in the grave, her body ascended into heaven to join her soul.<sup>33</sup> 'When the Apostles visited her tomb, they found that her body was gone and in its place blossomed lilies and roses.'<sup>34</sup> Hence the term 'dormition' not 'death' of the Virgin.

Bede, in his description of the Holy Places, says that 'the round church of Saint Mary' is on the valley of Jehoshaphat: 'on the eastern side below there is another, and to the right of it an empty tomb in which Saint Mary is said to have reposed for a

<sup>30</sup> J. A. Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy*, I, 1897, pp. 325, 361.

<sup>31</sup> There was, I believe, much destruction at Oviedo in the Spanish Civil War of 1935.

<sup>32</sup> Adamnan, *The Travels of Bishop Arculf*, in Wright, op. cit., p. 5. The prints of our Lord's feet are also mentioned by Bede, *De locis sanctis libellus*, Ch. 6 (*Works*, trans. Giles, 4, 1843, p. 417).

<sup>33</sup> As depicted, e.g., by Titian over the high altar of the Frari at Venice.

<sup>34</sup> E. A. Greene, *Saints and Their Symbols*, 1929, p. 138.

time; but who removed her or when this took place, no one can say.<sup>35</sup>

S. Thomas the apostle doubted the fact of her Assumption, wherefore the Virgin dropped her girdle to assure him: the girdle is preserved as a relic in the cathedral of Prato, whither it was brought from Palestine by the crusader Michele Dagomari of Prato in 1141 as part of his wife's dowry.

As there was no body to form the centre of a cult, the church provided the personal element in numerous phials containing her milk. The milk at Walsingham is mentioned by Erasmus and was the chief object of devotion there after the image of the Virgin itself. The milk at Oviedo was preserved not in a phial but in a metal box. A lock of the Virgin's hair is to be found at S. Prasside.

Articles belonging to the Virgin are her robe, which is one of the Four Great Relics at Aachen, her comb at Rome — and again at Besançon, and her marriage-ring at Perugia. This last is kept in the Cappella del Santo Anello (the first on the left when entering the duomo): the stone in it is probably some rare form of agate, but according to Goldoni, 'they say that the ring changes its colour and form miraculously according to the various persons who approach it.' Its reliquary has fifteen locks. A stool which belonged to the Virgin is claimed by S. Marco at Venice.

Bishop Arculf tells us that there were 'two churches at Nazareth, one on the site of the house in which our Lord was nursed when an infant. The other church was built on the site of the house in which the archangel Gabriel came to the blessed Mary.'<sup>36</sup>

The legend of the Casa Santa of Loreto is that it is the house at Nazareth in which the Virgin was born. It was the scene of the Annunciation, of the Incarnation, and was the house of the Holy Family after the return from Egypt. It was visited in 336 by the Empress Helena when she was on pilgrimage thither: she built the church over it, which became a place of pilgrimage. On May 20, 1291, owing to the capture of Nazareth by the Saracens who denied further access to it, it was transported by angels to Rauniza near Fiume (now Rijeka) in Dalmatia. Only the foundations were left in Nazareth, but it was said that the measurements (28 feet by 12½ feet by 13½ feet in height) corresponded exactly! The floor fell

<sup>35</sup> Bede, *De locis sanctis libellus*, Ch. 5 (*Works*, trans. Giles, 4, 1843, p. 417).

<sup>36</sup> Adamnan, *op. cit.*, in Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

out of the house as the angels carried it and had to be renewed. The Virgin appeared to Alessandro di Modruria, the local Dalmatian bishop, and explained to him that this was her house 'in which the Word became flesh', the altar being that erected by S. Peter, and the statue in cedar being her authentic likeness carved by S. Luke. On December 10, 1294, again owing to the danger from the Saracens, it was once more carried by angels to Recanati and from there eight months later to Loreto where it still is. Its arrival in Italy was announced in a vision to S. Nicholas of Tolentino. It has now been enclosed in a basilica, which has become one of the most visited sanctuaries in Christendom.

The black Virgin over the altar at Loreto is that mentioned above, carved in cedar of Lebanon: it had been carried off to Paris in 1798 during the French invasion of Italy.

The chapel of Our Lady of Walsingham, founded in 1061, was said to be an exact facsimile of the Casa Santa.

The most venerated images of the Madonna are the Black Virgins.<sup>37</sup> One of the most famous of these is the Virgo Paritura or Notre-Dame de sous-terre in the crypt of Chartres cathedral. The original, of peat-wood, was burnt in 1793, and the present statue — like that on the altar at Le Puy — is a copy. Neither is, because of this, the less venerated.

Capo Tindari, near Cefalù in Sicily, is crowned by a sanctuary in which is preserved a much venerated Black Virgin of Byzantine origin. The pilgrimage to it is on September 8.<sup>38</sup>

I have found but one reference to a relic in connection with S. Joseph: his slippers are among the relics to be found at Trèves.

### 3. THE EVANGELISTS AND THE APOSTLES

The body of *S. Matthew* was brought from the East in 954 and buried in the crypt of the cathedral of Salerno, which is dedicated to him. His head is also said to be in the cathedral treasury at Trèves.

The body of *S. Mark*<sup>39</sup> was in Alexandria till 829, when it was carried off by Venetian merchants to Venice, then supplanting S.

<sup>37</sup> List in *Notes & Queries*, 9th series, 2, pp. 449-50: see also indexes to Vols. 2, 3, 4, 1898-9. See also Émile Sailleus, *Nos Vierges noires, leur origine*, Paris, 1945.

<sup>38</sup> *Blue Guide to S. Italy*, 1959, p. 173.

<sup>39</sup> Bonser (1), p. 12.

Theodore as her patron saint. The story of the body of S. Mark is told in mosaic in the atrium and in enamel on the Pala d'Oro in S. Marco, that church having been built to receive it. The high altar contains his relics. 'The first church', says Grant Allen, 'was burnt down in 976, and with it, humanly speaking, the body of St Mark; though its miraculous preservation and subsequent rediscovery are matters of history.'<sup>40</sup> The autograph copy of his Gospel is also said to be in S. Marco.

S. Luke is accredited with being a physician and also an artist. He acquired this last reputation owing to the discovery in the catacombs of a portrait of the Virgin inscribed as executed by 'Luca'. The Virgin was his main 'subject'. Four (other) copies of her portrait occur in Rome: these are in the churches of S. Francesca Romana in the Forum, over the altar in S. Maria in Aracoeli, in S. John Lateran and in S. Maria Maggiore.<sup>41</sup> A papal bull is attached to the last mentioned to attest to its being genuine.

The Veneranda Imagen in the sanctuary of the basilica at Montserrat is 'a dark-coloured wooden statue of the Virgin and Child, said to have been carved by St. Luke. It is known locally as 'La Moreneta' (morena = dark)'.<sup>42</sup>

The Santa Sanctorum at the Lateran contains also the Acheiropoeton portrait of Christ, which is said to have been begun by S. Luke and finished by an angel. Legend says it was commissioned by the Madonna and the Apostles after the Ascension, and drawn by S. Luke after three days' prayer and fasting: the colouring was then done by an invisible hand — whence its epithet 'made without hands'. It is used as a charm during grave crises of the Church.<sup>43</sup>

S. Luke's body was one of the treasures of Constantinople. 'When [it] was brought [to Venice] from Bosnia, a dispute arose with the Benedictines of Santa Giustina at Padua, who claimed to possess it already, and the Pope had to decide between the two parties.'<sup>44</sup>

There seem to be but few relics connected with *S. John the Evangelist*. Since there is a legend (arising out of the passage in

<sup>40</sup> Grant Allen, *Historical Guides — Venice*, 1907, pp. 23-4.

<sup>41</sup> Bonser (1), pp. 9-10.

<sup>42</sup> *Blue Guide to Northern Spain*, 1930, pp. 57-8.

<sup>43</sup> A. J. C. Hare, *Walks in Rome*, 18th ed., 1909, p. 413.

<sup>44</sup> Burckhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 47 (footnote).

John, 21, verses 22-3, 'If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?') it is, perhaps, again natural that there should be no body. John, however, tells Dante 'Earth in the earth my body is' and that Christ and the Virgin alone rose with their bodies to heaven.<sup>45</sup>

There is a story that the Empress Galla Placidia was overtaken by a storm when voyaging to Ravenna and that she vowed to build a church there to S. John if she escaped. He appeared to her one night and left her his sandal, which was preserved in S. Giovanni Evangelista for many years. In the lunette above its gateway is a sculpture illustrating this legend.<sup>46</sup>

In the 'Cave of the vision of the Apocalypse' on the island of Patmos is shown a hole near the floor where S. John laid his head, and to the right of it a hollow to rest his hand when rising — both are now surrounded with silver. Further to the right is a shelf where his disciple took down the words of the Revelation. In the rock in front of the cave is the cleft where, we were told, the word of the Lord came through to him.

Various churches claim to possess relics of the greater apostles. A portable altar which is said to have been used by them is preserved in the Camara Santa at Oviedo. It is shaped like a book and enclosed in silver. The same chapel preserves one of S. Peter's sandals.

*S. Peter.* The sarcophagus of S. Peter, once in the catacombs on the Via Appia and then in the Lateran, has been preserved under the dome of S. Peter's since the fifteenth century.

The skulls of SS. Peter and Paul are said to be preserved together under the tabernacle in the Lateran. The altar in this church also encloses the greater part of the table upon which S. Peter is said to have celebrated Mass when in the house of Pudens.

There seems to be some uncertainty as to the relics of SS. Peter and Paul who were martyred in Rome on the same day. Hare says, 'Only half of the bodies of [these two] saints were held to be preserved here [in S. Peter's], the other portion of that of S. Peter being at the Lateran, and of S. Paul at S. Paolo fuori le Mura.'<sup>47</sup>

The sword with which S. Peter cut off Malchus' ear is said to be

<sup>45</sup> Dante, *Paradiso*, canto XXV, 124.

<sup>46</sup> This church suffered grievously during the late war, but the gateway was, according to its inscription, restored in 1960.

<sup>47</sup> A. J. C. Hare, *Walks in Rome*, 1909, p. 527.

at S. Marco in Venice. Hairs from his beard, his sandals, and parts of his ribs are claimed by Corbie. The church of S. Prasside has a miniature portrait of Christ which is said to have belonged to S. Peter and to have been left by him with the daughters of Pudens.

The story of the chains with which he was bound when in prison and which are now preserved in the church of S. Pietro in Vincoli has been told by me already in my article in *Folklore*, as has that of the holes made by his knees when he prayed that Simon Magus might be dropped by the demons he had invoked to support him in the air.

S. Andrew is said to have been martyred and buried at Patras. He is the patron saint of that town and a large new church, dedicated to him is now (1961) in process of erection. His body is said to have been brought from Constantinople in the thirteenth century to Amalfi: it is now in the crypt of its cathedral. His relics distil an oily matter (*manna di S. Andrea*) which is used for curative purposes and attracts numerous devotees to his festival on November 30. His head, however, is one of the four great treasures of S. Peter's, having been acquired by Pius II in 1460.

S. Andrew is said to protect against gout, sore throat and rheumatism.

Legend says that S. James sailed to Galicia and preached the Gospel in Spain before returning to Jerusalem: he was beheaded by Herod in A.D. 43. His disciples, accompanied by an angel, took the body to Joppa by night: here it embarked itself in a boat which took it back to Galicia, reaching Padron in the short space of seven days. It was there put into a cave sacred to Bacchus. The sepulchre was miraculously discovered in 812 with the aid of a star which appeared night after night in the same place. The body was translated in 829 to Compostella, and the church built over it was consecrated on May 1, 893.<sup>48</sup>

S. Bartholomew. The body of this apostle was given by the Emperor Otho III to the church (which is dedicated to him) on the island in the Tiber. I have suggested a solution to the problem of the two bodies of the saint in my former article in *Folklore*.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup> C. G. Hurstley, *The Story of Santiago de Compostella* (Mediaeval Towns Series), 1912, pp. 22-3.

<sup>49</sup> Bonser (1), p. 15.



*S. Thomas* is said to have travelled to India: there he found the Three Magi, whom he baptized. His relics were taken to Goa in the sixteenth century. The story of *S. Thomas* and the girdle of the Virgin has been related above.

Little seems to be known of the relics of the remaining apostles.

It is natural that none appertaining to *Judas Iscariot* should exist, though there are many apocryphal stories of him. One of the thirty pieces of silver for which he sold Our Lord is said to be preserved in the church of *S. Croce* in Gerusalemme at Rome.

The body of *S. Matthias* who became an apostle in his place is said to be preserved at *S. Maria Maggiore*. Legend says he suffered martyrdom in Judah.

#### 4. OTHER CONTEMPORARIES OF OUR LORD

The relics of *S. Mary Magdalen* are claimed to be in the crypt of the abbey of *Vézaley*, which is dedicated to her. They are said to have been brought thither from *S. Maximin* in Provence in the middle of the eleventh century on the approach of the Saracens. A dispute arose, however, with *S. Maximin* about 1280: the latter maintained that the authentic relics had never been transferred thence. At *S. Maximin* is a modern gilt-bronze reliquary containing her head.

One of her fingers is said to be at *S. Marco* in Venice. The vase of 'ointment of spikenard' with which she anointed Christ's feet is to be found in the Chapel of the Teutonic Knights at Palermo.<sup>50</sup>

*S. John the Baptist* was buried at Sebaste, on the site of Samaria. His bones were burnt and the dust scattered in the time of Julian the Apostate, but some was saved and preserved — at Alexandria for instance. Various copies of the decapitated head exist: it was said to have been buried in Herod's palace, where it was discovered in 330 and taken to Cilicia.

Another head was found at Emesa in 454: it was taken in 850 to Constantinople, where it remained till the sack in 1204: it was then brought to France by a canon of Amiens.<sup>51</sup>

Yet another head is said to be in the church of *S. Silvestro* in Capite, near the Corso, in Rome. His skull and the stone — stained red — on which he was beheaded are said to be in the

<sup>50</sup> F. de Mély, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

<sup>51</sup> Smith and Cheetham, *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, 1875, I, p. 883.

baptistry of S. Marco in Venice. The cloth in which his body was wrapped is one of the Four Great Relics in the cathedral treasury at Aachen.

*S. Paul* was beheaded outside the Porta Ostiensis at Rome. The church of S. Paolo alle Tre Fontane which was built on the site 'contains' says Hare, 'the pillar to which he is said to have been bound, the block of marble on which he is supposed to have been beheaded, and the three fountains which sprang forth wherever the severed head struck the earth during three bounds which it made after decapitation'.<sup>52</sup> The first fountain was said to be warm, the second tepid, and the third cold: but there is now no difference in their temperatures.

The preservation of S. Paul's body I have already mentioned under S. Peter.

There are relics of *S. Stephen* at the Church of S. Stefano Rotondo at Rome, but his body is said to be at S. Lorenzo fuori le Mura. 'The relics of St. Stephen', says Hare, 'were preserved at Constantinople, whither they had been transported from Jerusalem by the Empress Eudoxia, wife of Theodosius II. Hearing that her daughter Eudoxia, wife of Valentinian II, Emperor of the West, was afflicted with a devil, she begged her to come to Constantinople that her demon might be driven out by the touch of the relics. The younger Eudoxia wished to comply, but the devil refused to leave her unless S. Stephen was brought to Rome. An agreement was therefore made that the relics of S. Stephen should be exchanged for those of S. Laurence. S. Stephen arrived, and the Empress was immediately relieved of her devil.' But trouble arose about the relics of S. Laurence leaving Rome, 'and the bodies of the two martyrs were laid in the same sarcophagus.'<sup>53</sup>

Stones cast at S. Stephen are shown at Florence, Arles, and at Vigaud in Languedoc. One of his ribs is claimed by S. Marco at Venice.

It was believed that *S. Barnabas* was stoned by the Jews of Salamis in Cyprus about A.D. 64. The body was discovered by Antemius, bishop of Cyprus in 478, S. Barnabas having appeared to him several times in visions. It was found in a cave and a copy of the Gospel of S. Matthew was found with it in the coffin.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Hare, *Walks in Rome*, p. 615.

<sup>53</sup> Hare, *op. cit.*, p. 430.

<sup>54</sup> Smith and Cheetham, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 178-9.

## THE CULT OF RELICS IN THE MIDDLE AGES

*SS. Pudentiana and Prasside* were the daughters of Cornelius Pudens, an early convert of S. Paul, and of his wife Claudia, the (much disputed) daughter of Cogidumnus, who was king in Sussex in the time of the Emperor Claudius. The churches dedicated to both these saints in Rome contain many relics: a well in that of the former was the burial-place, we were told, of 3,000 martyrs. S. Prasside sheltered many Christians whom she buried after their martyrdoms in the catacombs of her grandmother S. Priscilla, 'but collecting their blood in a sponge, placed it in a well in her own house, where she was eventually buried herself.'<sup>55</sup>

A saint's blood was collected and preserved in a phial, a napkin, or a sponge: the dust of the place on which it was spilt, as in the case of S. Oswald,<sup>56</sup> also possessed miraculous healing power.

### 5. MEDIEVAL SAINTS

The shrines of many popes, bishops, hermits, and others who led especially sainted lives, or ecclesiastics who died violent deaths, also became resorts of pilgrims during the Middle Ages. I will mention a few from western Europe and then indicate the chief English shrines to which pilgrimages were made.

The churches of Rome contain many of these saintly relics.

*S. Laurence* was martyred at Rome in 258 under Claudius II. His body as already mentioned, lies in S. Lorenzo fuori le Mura, built by Constantine. His head is at the Quirinal, and his gridiron and chains are shown at S. Lorenzo in Lucina. A bar of his gridiron is also claimed by the Escorial.<sup>57</sup>

*S. Cecilia* was martyred in 280 in the time of Alexander Severus: she lies in the church dedicated to her beyond the Tiber. Her embalmed body was discovered when her tomb was opened in the sixteenth century. This marble statue by Maderno showing the posture in which she was found is beneath the altar.

The relics of *S. Sebastian*<sup>58</sup> (d. 288) are under the altar of his church on the Via Appia. Three more copies of his body are said to exist elsewhere, also two more copies of his head. The pillar to which he was bound when shot at with arrows is under the altar in the crypt of S. Alessio on the Aventine.<sup>59</sup> His arrows are exhibited at

<sup>55</sup> Hare, op. cit., p. 379.

<sup>57</sup> Hare, op. cit., p. 325.

<sup>58</sup> See also Bonser (1), pp. 5-6.

<sup>56</sup> Bonser (2), p. 183.

<sup>59</sup> Hare, op. cit., p. 255.

the Augustinian monastery at Poitiers and at Lambesi in Provence. His brains are shown by the Grey Friars at Angers.

The body of *S. Catherine of Siena* (1347–80) lies beneath the high altar of S. Maria sopra Minerva: it was deposited there in 1461 by S. Antonino, archbishop of Florence.

The church of Il Gesù has under its altar the body of *S. Ignatius Loyola* (d. 1556).

The heart of *S. Carlo Borromeo* is under the altar of the church of S. Carlo in Corso. S. Charles (d. 1584) was archbishop of Milan, and devoted his life to the good of his diocese, the reform of abuses, and the care of the sick and the poor — especially during the epidemic of 1576. A picture by Pietro da Cortona of the archbishop in a procession during this epidemic is over the high altar in the church of S. Carlo a' Catinari. The cord which he wore round his neck in the procession is preserved here: the crucifix which he was carrying is in the north transept of Milan Cathedral. His body, now a shrivelled mummy, lies in a chapel under the high altar at Milan — a strange contrast to the glitter around it. He is the tutelary saint in Milan against pestilence.

The relics of many of the greater medieval saints are distributed over Italy.

*S. Ambrose* (d. 397) lies in a modern shrine in the crypt of his church (S. Ambrogio) at Milan, together with the bodies of SS. Gervasius and Protasius which he had placed there when dedicating the church.<sup>60</sup>

His convert, *S. Augustine of Hippo*, lies in the altar of S. Pietro in Ciel d'Oro at Pavia, his relics having been removed thither from Carthage during the Arian persecutions. His *arca* at Pavia is one of the great sculptural shrines of Italy.

Another of these 'great shrines' is in S. Eustorgio outside the Porta Ticinese at Milan and contains the remains of *S. Peter Martyr* who was murdered in 1252 owing to his cruelties as Inquisitor General of Pope Honorius III.

The shrine of S. Anthony is in his church (Il Santo) at Padua: the body of S. Francis lies in the crypt of his church at Assisi, that of S. Clare in hers in the same city: S. Dominic lies in his *arca* in the church of S. Domenico at Bologna, to which it was

<sup>60</sup> For a description of the three bodies, see Edward Hutton, *Cities of Lombardy*, 1912, p. 91.

transferred in 1411 from a humbler resting-place behind the high altar.

There are far fewer relics in France than in Italy, and her saints are of less note. But the relics of S. Martin of Tours deserve to be mentioned.

*S. Martin* died at the neighbouring village of Candes in 397, and was buried in his basilica at Tours: thence the early kings carried his relics with them in their wars. About the year 640 his relics were placed in a magnificent *chasse*, the work of S. Éloi and the gift of King Dagobert.<sup>61</sup> Like those of S. Cuthbert, his relics were subjected to a series of perigrinations owing to the incursions of the Norsemen. They burned his basilica in 853, but the *chasse* was saved. His tomb was visited by various French kings and countless other pilgrims (Nov. 11).

William of Malmesbury tells how S. Martin's body was taken to Auxerre for safety, and placed in the church of S. Germanus where it worked miracles. A dispute arose between the monks of Tours and those of Auxerre as to the division of the 'takings' at his shrine. 'To solve this . . . a leprous person was sought, and placed . . . between the bodies of the two saints. All human watch was prohibited for the whole night: the glory of Martin alone was vigilant: for the next day, the skin of the man on his side appeared clear, while on that of Germanus, it was discoloured with its customary deformity. And, that they might not attribute this miracle to chance, they turned the yet diseased side to Martin. As soon as the morning began to dawn, the man was found . . . perfectly cured, declaring the kind condescension of the resident patron, who yielded to the honour of such a welcome stranger.'<sup>62</sup>

The chief English shrines where those of S. Thomas at Canterbury and of Our Lady at Walsingham. Hardly less frequented than these two were those of S. Alban at St Albans, S. Edmund at Bury, S. Edward the Confessor at Westminster, S. Wilfrid at Ripon (to which the right of sanctuary was granted by King Athelstan), and S. Swithun at Winchester.

But there were many other shrines throughout the country: such were those of S. Richard at Chichester, S. Hugh at Lincoln, S.

<sup>61</sup> Henri Bas, *Saint Martin*, Tours, 1897, p. 215.

<sup>62</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Chronicle of the Kings of England*, Bk. ii, Ch. 4, Bohn's Library, 1866, p. 116.

William at York, S. Chad at Lichfield, S. Frideswide at Oxford, S. Milburga at Wenlock, S. Gilbert at Sempringham, S. Kenelm at Winchcombe and the dwarf S. Neot at St. Neots in Cornwall. All these, except that at Walsingham, were of native saints.

The enormous wealth of the monasteries, acquired by the offerings at their shrines, was one of the major causes of their suppression: the destruction of most of the relics in this country was a natural result of the Reformation. Many relics, however, had been sent abroad for safety: such were the head of S. Margaret and the arm of S. Ninian (now lost) which were taken to the chapel of the Scots' Seminary at Douai.<sup>63</sup>

A typical medieval pilgrimage is that of which Chaucer gives a lively picture in his Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*. Women — such as the Prioress and the Wife of Bath — took part as well as men. The character of the pilgrims, judging from Chaucer's account and those of various historians, was not always of the best. The most popular season, at least with regard to Canterbury, was apparently April, when 'longen folk to goon on pilgrimages . . . the holy blisful martir for to seke'.

*S. Thomas à Becket* was not the saintly type of S. Carlo, but he was an archbishop and his murder in his own cathedral secured him canonization two years later, in 1172. Almost immediately his tomb became a centre of pilgrimage, not only 'from every shires ende of Engeland', but from all over Christendom. 'As many as 100,000 of these devotees', says A. G. Hill, 'are said to have been present at Canterbury at one time. His cultus [there] greatly superseded that of our Lord, or even of the Virgin, as in one year it is recorded that there were no offerings at His altar, £4 1s. 8d. at the Virgin's, and £954 6s. 3d. at that of S. Thomas: a vast sum in the monetary value of that day.'<sup>64</sup> Salzman quotes a description of the shrine by an Italian visitor in 1496: its adornments amounted to about a million pounds of modern money.<sup>65</sup>

The pewter ampullae which were given as souvenirs to pilgrims at his shrine were stamped 'Optimus egrorum medicus fit Thomas bonorum.' Such ampullae were flasks for holy water, taken away

<sup>63</sup> H. Chadwick, 'The Arm of St. Ninian', in *Trans. Dumfriess. Ant. Soc.*, 3rd S., 23 (1901-4), 1946, p. 30.

<sup>64</sup> A. G. Hill, *Pilgrimages to English Shrines in the Middle Ages*, p. 4.

<sup>65</sup> L. F. Salzman, *English Life in the Middle Ages*, 1926, p. 278.

by pilgrims for the benefit of their sick friends. There are several in Fountains Abbey museum, one in the form of a scallop shell.

Various relics of Becket are to be found on the Continent. His arm, for instance, is the chief relic in the church of S. Tommaso degli Inglesi in Rome, and two little bags containing his brains are preserved in the basilica of S. Maria Maggiore. His chasuble is in the cathedral treasury at Reims.

After Canterbury, perhaps the most popular English shrine was that of *Our Lady of Walsingham*. A chapel was built here early in the twelfth century by one Richoldie, and Augustinian canons formed a house here about 1160. 'Almost from the foundation of the priory up to the Dissolution,' says A. G. Hill quoting H. Harrod, 'there was one increasing movement of pilgrims to and from Walsingham. The Virgin's milk and other attractions were from time to time added; but the image of the Virgin in the small chapel, in all respects like the *Santa Casa* at Nazareth . . . was the original, and continued to the Dissolution the primary object of the pilgrim's visit'.<sup>66</sup> The image was publicly burnt at Smithfield at the Dissolution. Erasmus mentions too holy wells here, which, according to legend, sprang from the ground at the command of the Virgin and which were used for curing pains of the head and stomach.

*S. Alban* was beheaded in A.D. 305. 'Saint Germanus', says Oman, 'is recorded to have visited and honoured his grave in 429; his cult, therefore was well established at Verulamium in the early fifth century.'<sup>67</sup> The place of his burial was revealed by an angel to Offa, who built the church of St Albans and transferred the relics thither in 794. The shrine became the resort of countless pilgrims.

The head of *S. Chad* was at Lichfield until the Reformation, when it was lost. Four relics of this saint are, however, still preserved in his cathedral at Birmingham — his left femur, the two tibiae, and a portion of the humerus.<sup>68</sup>

Wenlock Abbey enshrined the uncorrupt body of its first abbess, *S. Milburga*, which was discovered by a miracle in the reign of William I.

The shrine of *Edward the Confessor* at Westminster was not

<sup>66</sup> A. G. Hill, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>67</sup> Charles Oman, *England Before the Norman Conquest*, 1910, p. 179.

<sup>68</sup> John Hewitt, 'The Keeper of St. Chad's Head in Lichfield Cathedral', in *Archaeol. Jnl.*, 23, 1876, p. 77.

despoiled at the Reformation, and his relics still remain there. The story of Edward's uncorrupt body I have told elsewhere.<sup>69</sup>

*S. Wulfstan*, bishop of Worcester, was canonized in 1203. The offerings at his shrine were devoted to the upkeep of the hospital which he had founded at Worcester just after the Conquest.

Details as the relics of other Anglo-Saxon saints — of *S. Cuthbert* and the travels of his body, of *S. Oswald* of Northumbria, of *S. Swithun* and of King *Edmund* of East Anglia who was martyred by the Danes in 870, I have also given elsewhere.<sup>70</sup>

To sum up the results of this brief survey: on the one hand, faith and religious fervour — then as now — inspired many pilgrims with exaltation and satisfied their hopes and aspirations: but, on the other hand, the cold light of reason and the discipline of modern research requirements make it difficult for the sceptic of today to comprehend the medieval outlook with regard to relics.

But the combination of 'Primitive and Western' in Canon MacCulloch's article in Hastings' *Encyclopaedia* demonstrates the sequence of thought and its continuance until it was changed by the Renaissance.

The concept that an inanimate object contained magical power or supernatural virtue, whether primitive or Christian and that 'the influence working in the whole works also in the part, although separate from it'<sup>71</sup> explains the function of relics and their cult.

The bodies (and other relics) of saints which date from the time after the establishment of Christianity are obviously in most cases genuine and were justly treasured by devout contemporaries and by their disciples, but those of the earliest period, such as those of Christ Himself and of the Virgin Mary, usually — alas — are not, and one wonders at the twisted ingenuity of the monks who invented such fictitious relics as the Virgin's milk, and also at the low intelligence of the pilgrim who was taken in by them.

<sup>69</sup> Bonser (2), p. 197.

<sup>70</sup> Bonser (2), Chapter XI, *passim*.

<sup>71</sup> MacCulloch, *op. cit.*, p. 650.